

# Virginia Department of Historic Resources

## PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the proposed district for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the district could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

<b>General Property Information</b>		For Staff Use Only DHR ID #: <b><i>062-5160</i></b>	
District Name(s):	Warminster Rural Historic District		
District or Selected Building Date(s):	Pre-Contact, <input type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post 1742, 1788, 19 <sup>th</sup> & early 20 <sup>th</sup> Centuries	Open to the Public?	XNo
Main District Streets and/or Routes:	Nelson County Route 626 and 604	City: Wingina	Zip: 24599
County or Ind. City:	Nelson	USGS Quad(s):	Howardsville Quadrant

## Physical Character of General Surroundings

(James River)

Acreage: 3,665, Setting (choose one): ☐City ☐Urban ☐Town ☐Suburban ☒Rural ☐Transportation Corridor  
approx..

Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features/Streetscapes: Dramatically sited in southern Nelson County, the proposed Warminster Rural Historic District is principally comprised of the parent mid 18th century Liberty Hall plantation, portions of late 18th century plantations known as Edgewood and Bon Aired that originally formed part of the Liberty Hall tract; the lost town and lost village of Warminster, that served as a regional center of transportation, commerce and industry, the first during the bateau and canal eras and the second during the railroad era of Virginia history; the late 18th century Midway Mill site along the canal and rail-line upstream from Liberty Hall and Warminster; and a cluster of buildings, sites and cemeteries associated with African American families who lived on the Old Warminster Road on the northwestern boundary of the District. The District is characterized by a gently rolling upland surface, dissected by numerous streams – Swan Creek, Mayo's Creek, Slater Branch – and having linear ridges that rise as much as several hundred feet above the general elevation of the upland. Listed individually on the National Register are the seats of Bon Aired and Edgewood. These two are pillars of the district, and Bon Aired commands panoramic views of the James River and its bottomlands; all property patented by Dr. William Cabell between 1730 and 1734, and settled by him in 1741. The James River, major drainage system of the region, flows in a meandering course northeasterly to define the southern boundary of the district, and forms the area's character. The riverine bottomland environment used for millennia as the site of domestic camps by Native Americans is used today as agricultural fields. The upper woodland area is hilly with forests of hardwood and pine.

The Warminster Rural Historic District is bounded generally, on the north by Slater Branch from its headwaters to its mouth, thence up the left bank of the James River to a point encompassing Midway Mill and the old "Simpson House," thence along the west bank of Mayo Creek as it meanders to Highway 56. It follows that road north for a short distance to the old St. Hebron - Warminster Road, thence along that road northeast to a point, thence directly to SR 604 at the gap above Begley Springs, thence to the beginning. Related resources such as mining sites lie near but just outside the boundary line, but it is assumed that the final boundary will follow recorded parcels lines on tax maps and such sites will be included in the final District boundary.

Ownership Categories: Private ☐Public-Local Public-State (James River Wildlife Mgt.) ☐Public-Federal

## General District Information

What were the historical uses of the resources within the proposed district? Examples include: Dwelling, Store, Barn, etc...

The site of Native American domestic camps and a nearby Monacan village before English settlement. Plantation farms and smaller farms with dwellings, mill, outbuildings including: corn barn, dairy, dovecote, smokehouse, icehouse. The Town of Warminster itself was a commercial tobacco port town created around a trade in cash crops and a tobacco weighing, inspection and shipping center, a mill, blacksmith shop, Masonic Lodge, and dwellings laid out along a main street. Remnants of the James River and Kanawha Canal. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a second Warminster village sprang up on the railroad line that replaced the canal with a RR depot, post office, general store, blacksmith shop and school. Historic resources include family cemeteries and enslaved peoples' cemeteries, dwellings, two churches and other remnants of an African American community that lived on the margins of this agricultural community.

What are the current uses? (if other than the historical use) Domestic, agricultural, funerary

Architectural styles or elements of buildings within the proposed district: Federal, Palladian, Vernacular

Architects, builders, or original owners of buildings within the proposed district:

“Edgewood” [VDHR 062-004] was built circa 1790 on a portion of Liberty Hall Plantation adjacent to [on the western most “lot” of] the Town of Warminster. I was built for and originally owned by Robert Rives, a successful merchant, married to Margaret Jordan Cabell, and father of William Cabell Rives, who had a spectacular political career, including Ambassador to France and U. S. Senator. Four of the Rives’ other children served in the General Assembly. When Rives moved to Oak Ridge in 1803, Nicholas Cabell Jr. of Liberty Hall bought the house, and in 1807 Nicholas Cabell Jr. sold it to his brother, Joseph Carrington Cabell, who then enlarged the house, often using Thomas Jefferson’s workmen and those of John Hartwell Cocke of Bremono. Joseph circa 1820 built the “Tucker Cottage” for his father-in-law, jurist St. George Tucker. Much of the work was performed by Malcolm Crawford and Lyman Peck, highly regarded workmen from the University of Virginia. “Edgewood” has remained in, and occupied by the Cabell family up to today, a family ownership of 225 years.

“Bon Aire” [VDHR 062-0089] Built originally for Dr. George Cabell, Jr. ,in 1812, following a developing Virginia tradition of three-and five-part houses in the Palladian vein, the house sits high on a hill with a dramatic view of the James River and bottom lands. The plan of Bon Aire is linked to a number of tripartite Virginia houses, such Dr. Cabell Sr.’s house Point of Honor, in Lynchburg. Dr. Cabell, Jr. practiced medicine in Warminster. His son, Dr. J.L. Cabell became the first President of the Medical Faculty at the University of Virginia, was in charge of Confederate military hospitals during the Civil War, and was later President of the National Board of Health.

“Liberty Hall” (archaeological remains)[VDHR 44NE 0188 et. al.] Built in 1742 for Dr. William Cabell, the house was the seat of the Swan Creek Plantation, core area of the extensive holdings of Dr. William and Elizabeth Burks Cabell. Birthplace of Joseph Carrington Cabell, who spent over forty years in the Virginia General Assembly, and was Thomas Jefferson’s chief assistant in the founding and funding of the University of Virginia. Description and photos of the house may be found in Robert A. Lancaster’s Historic Virginia Homes and Churches, noted in Bibliography. Remaining on the property are the remains of Liberty Hall, or Swan Creek Mill, [VDHR NE44 0184], the first grist mill in Amherst, later Nelson, County.

Are there any known threats to this district?

The district lies in close proximity to one of the Alternate routes of the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline. The proposed route may not be known until late summer.

**General Description of District:** (Please describe building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district and a general setting and/or streetscape description.),

The resources in the proposed district include two dwellings on the National Register of Historic Places that demonstrate sophisticated, somewhat elegant approaches to domestic architecture.

Edgewood [VDHR 062 004] The original house was built in 1790, shortly after the incorporation of the Town of Warminster in 1788, on the westernmost lot of the town. The house was built by Robert Rives, [report says construction was 1793] and added to and expanded by Joseph C. Cabell after 1808, into a sprawling five-part Palladian structure, influenced by his association with Thomas Jefferson. The 1937 Works Progress Administration report in the Library of Virginia Archives describes the central part of the house as being “of brick and weatherboarded over.” Report describes Joseph Cabell as adding wings and arches in the three middle rooms, and more rooms later, all additions of frame construction. Report describes floors of four inch pine planks “and have been painted.” Report states: “The brick and nails were made on the place, also the lathes, sills and framework. All of the timbers were cut in the mountains on the place.” Describes the outbuildings, which still stand. Report states millwork, mantels, etc. is “fancy” or “very elaborate.” No archaeological investigations have been attempted to date, but surviving documentary evidence, including letters, insurance policies, and photographs, gives significant insight into the original 1790 structure. The ruins of the main house with kitchen wing, which burned in 1955, the ruins remain on the original site. Evidence of a slate roof and a large brick kitchen chimney remain, as do portions of a poured concrete porch foundation. The large lawn associated with the main house has recently been reclaimed from woodlands and is maintained in a park-like setting. No archaeological investigations have been attempted to date, but surviving documentary evidence, including letters, insurance policies, and photographs, gives significant insight into the original 1790 structure.

Currently, the sixty-five acre property, located on flat pastureland with mature trees near the James River, includes the main house ruins, the circa 1820 Tucker Cottage, an 18th-century dovecote, an 18th-century dairy, an 1828 icehouse, an 18th-century smokehouse, an early 19th-century corncrib, and a mid-19th-century barn or granary. Later buildings include a circa 1940's tenant house (now a woodworking shop), which appears to have been constructed on the existing foundation of a slave quarter and a circa 1940 machine shed. Ruins of another small early 19th-century outbuilding, possibly a smokehouse related to the slave quarter, are also located on the site.

Tucker Cottage In 1820 Joseph Cabell began work on a vernacular 19<sup>th</sup>-century frame cottage for his father-in-law, Virginia jurist St. George Tucker, and Tucker's wife, Lelia Skipwith Carter Tucker. Cabell turned to Malcolm Crawford and Lyman Peck, Jefferson's workmen from the University of Virginia, which was being built in Charlottesville at the time. Portions of the building suggest the possibility that Tucker Cottage may have begun in the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century as a smaller building that was possibly used as an office or other plantation support structure. On the front porch eighteenth-century detailing includes delicate lambs-tongue stop chamfering on the posts, returning at the top into octagonal molded capitals, and a cyma-scrolled fascia suggestive of the Queen Ann period of furniture. Wrought nails were used throughout its construction.

#### Edgewood Outbuildings:

Dairy, circa 1790 Set on a brick foundation, the wood-frame dairy building is capped by a pyramidal slate roof with carved wood finial. The square structure measures ten feet by ten feet. Clad in weatherboard siding, consisting of original tulip poplar beaded boards attached with wrought rosehead nails, infilled with plain-sawn replacements, the one-story structure faces west in a line of three ancillary domestic outbuildings. The structure is detailed with a boxed wood cornice and a cornice-level ventilation screen typical of dairy buildings. The screen is detailed with curvilinear s-motif decorative slats. A temporary replacement single-leaf six-panel door replaced a non-original door in badly deteriorated condition, which was saved nonetheless.

The interior reveals hand-wrought nails, braced-framing, ghosting of previous plastering and later whitewash, and sash-sawn saw marks. The building was constructed using tulip poplar sills, white oak posts, and southern yellow pine roof framing. New white oak sills, mortised and tenoned exactly like the originals, were installed in 2002. Examples of the original “fish-scale” pine shingle roof were also discovered during restoration and stabilization work. The building awaits the completion of the restoration, which will include replacement, in kind, of siding too badly deteriorated to remain in place, the repair of the cornice fascia and soffit, and stabilization of the existing slate roof.

Dovecote, circa 1790 Located on the east end of a row of three outbuildings, the square footprinted dovecote also measures ten feet by ten feet. The one-story wood-frame structure features a pyramidal standing-seam tin roof, a boxed wood cornice with bedmolding, beaded and plain-edged siding, square cornerboards, and a replacement single-leaf vertical-board door with a decorative surround featuring a molded backband. Historic photographs reveal that a ledge/bird perch with bracket supports was originally located on the primary elevation. Interior features include wrought nails, flush posts, both hewn and sawn studs, and braced framing. The building was constructed using tulip poplar sills, white oak posts, and southern yellow pine roof framing. The building is currently in original unrestored condition awaiting the extensive repair and stabilization that will be required.

Smokehouse, circa 1800 Slightly larger than the dairy and dovecote, the fourteen foot by fourteen foot smokehouse is centrally located in a row between the other two structures. Also pyramidal in form, the wood-frame smokehouse features beaded and plain weatherboard siding, a slate roof with wood finial, and a boxed wood cornice. An original single-leaf vertical-board door and vertical slat vents are located on the north elevation. The structural members consist of single-hewn L-shaped corner posts with close-set studs. Extensive repair was done to the roof system at some point in the past. The sills are constructed of tulip poplar rather than the southern yellow pine used in the other two structures. Cut nails were also used for the construction of the building, suggesting that it was built slightly later than the smokehouse and dovecote. Wrought strap hinges details the structure. A partial brick foundation, which extends beyond the building footprint, suggests that this building may have been moved to the site and placed on an existing foundation. The building is in unrestored condition awaiting repair and stabilization. Of the three outbuildings in this group it is in the best condition, needing only moderate repair.

Icehouse, 1828 Based on archival documentation, it is known that the icehouse was constructed by Cabell in 1828. The round structure, constructed of four-course American bond, is currently missing its conical roof. Set on a stone foundation that extends 16-feet into the ground, the structure currently stands as a shell of its original form. The large structure measures twenty feet in diameter and stands eight feet above ground. Fenestration included doors on the west and south elevations, while windows were located on the east and north sides. One wooden door frame survives on the south elevation. An arched opening, infilled with stone matching the foundation, also exists although its original purpose is unclear. It is generally believed that the structure burned during the fire that destroyed the main house. However, historic family photographs from 1952 reveal that the roof was missing prior to the loss of the Edgewood dwelling. The brickwork over the one surviving doorframe was rebuilt following its collapse in the late 1990s (lime mortar was used in the rebuilding). Additional stabilization of the brickwork will be necessary.

Corncrib, pre-1840 The one-and-a-half story three-bay-wide diamond-notched log corncrib measures sixteen feet by thirty-one feet. Constructed of white oak logs, the rectangular structure is capped by a side-gabled corrugated metal roof that was added in the 1960s. Overhanging eaves, notched sleeper joist sills, a stone foundation, and open eave ventilation slats further define the structure. Interior detailing includes log partitions, machine cut nails, bridle jointed rafters pinned at the peak, and a single-leaf vertical-board door with circular sawn marks. A weatherboard gable peak also details this agricultural building. A circa 1960s machine shed addition supported by bracketed wood posts extends across the rear elevation with three open bays and exposed rafter tails. Oral family tradition states that the structure once featured a cupola, although no evidence of this has been found.

Barn/Stable/possible Granary, pre-1860 The large sixty-by-seventeen-foot wood-frame barn/stable features a rectangular footprint, side-gabled corrugated metal roof, board-and-batten cladding, and a stone foundation. Vertical-board doors and a wide side-elevation fascia detail the structure. The interior features a west end stall, while the remainder is open with a wood floor and interior planking on the studs to three feet in height, suggesting use as a granary. Machine cut nails are located in the rafters, while both braced framing and circular-sawn structural members are present.

Tenant House/Woodshop (on slave quarter foundation), circa 1940s Constructed on what is believed to be an original slave quarter foundation, a circa 1940s tenant house measures thirty-six by twenty-three feet. The one-and-a-half story rectangular wood-frame building sits on a brick and poured concrete foundation and features weatherboard siding, 6/6, 4/4, and six-light wood windows, a corrugated metal gable roof, overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and a central-interior parged chimney, which may date to the original double slave quarter. A shed wing projects to the south, which currently includes the primary entrance fitted with double-leaf fifteen-light modern metal doors. The building currently houses a woodworking shop.

Machine Shed, circa 1940 The one-story wood-frame machine shed features a “five-V” metal shed roof, vertical-board cladding, and five open wood-post-supported bays on the south elevation. Two open window bays are located on the east. Round log rafters, re-used railroad ties and posts are used as the structural members.

Well, Historic (date unknown although may date to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century) Currently capped with a concrete slab, the fieldstone-lined well extends forty feet into the ground to the water line. Its construction and location near the original Edgewood house site indicate its probable use since the construction of the house. Photographs from the 1930s reveal that the well was once covered with a small one-story weatherboard-clad, side-gabled well house with central single-leaf door. Photographs also reveal that the structure remained standing in 1952 after the destruction of the icehouse roof. However, the building may have burned in the 1955 fire at Edgewood.

Smokehouse ruins, circa 1820 Dating to the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ruins of what appears to be a smokehouse or other ancillary building for the original slave quarter building remain. Surviving building fabric includes a pyramidal ten-foot-square standing-seam metal roof with overhanging eaves, sash-sawn framing, cut nails, half-dovetailed ceiling joists, a king-post roof structure with square finial, and remains of rat wire, which may suggest that it was used as a smokehouse.

Edgewood Cemetery A 19th-century Cabell Family cemetery with five graves, each with a stone slab tablet marker set on a brick base, including those of Joseph Carrington Cabell, Virginia politician, and S. George Tucker, the eminent Virginia jurist.

The buildings are generally clustered together near the ruins of the original Edgewood dwelling, including a lane of domestic outbuildings, with the tenant house/shop (on a slave quarter foundation) located slightly further afield. The Tucker cottage, which was expanded with a wing addition after the 1955 fire, the cemetery, and machine shed are also located a bit further away from the original house site. However, all of the buildings are located in the same general vicinity, primarily along the gravel driveway. In total there are nine historic buildings, one historic cemetery, two historic ruins, and an historic well associated with the Edgewood property. Although the Edgewood property as a whole has not an archaeological survey to document the presence of sites, the ruins of the original Edgewood main house and of another small early 19<sup>th</sup>-century outbuilding contribute to the potential archeological resources of this site.<sup>1</sup>

Bon Aire, Also listed on the Nation Register is Bon Aire. A Federal-style, Palladian in plan three-part house

has brick walls, laid in Flemish bond. Built in 1812 for Dr. George Cabell, Jr., the house was inspired by Palladian forms published in mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century English pattern books. During the latter part of the century, there developed a strong tradition in Virginia of three- and five- part houses in the Palladian vein. Treated as a classical temple motif, the pedimented center block of the three-part ensemble is capped by a pedimented gable roof covered in slate. Bon Aire's special organization is identical to a number of three-part dwellings located in both the Tidewater and Piedmont. With the exception of the picture rails, a recent addition, all interior trim is original, conservative in design, and competently executed. The entrance hall is an especially dignified space. Joseph Cabell used Palladian ideas in his expansion of Edgewood, above.<sup>2</sup>

The district also includes documented archaeological resources that have not been studied beyond the reconnaissance level:

Liberty Hall Manor House, originally called Swan Creek Plantation, no longer extant, [burned 1895] was the core area of Dr. William Cabell's holdings, was built circa 1742, and burned circa 1895. Seen in numerous photographs, the house appears to be a two-story, five-bay, central passage I-House with a hip roof and two interior end chimneys. The symmetry of the house was also reflected in the horizontally and vertically aligned six over six windows. Although the photograph is grainy, the chimneys and the continuous foundation appear to have been made of brick. The exterior covering appears to be clapboard covered with white paint. The single bay front porch was supported by piers, and its hipped roof was supported by four columns secured to the porch floor. A small ancillary porch with a shed roof was attached to the north gable end of the house. Also depicted in the photograph are one or two outbuildings to the rear of the house.

Artifacts found at the site in the owner's personal collection include a variety of ceramic sherds and one projectile point. Ceramic sherds include tin-glazed earthenware, porcelain with blue handpainted patterns, green shell-edge pearlware with a rococo style rim design and impressed lines, blue transfer print plate with a rococo style rim design, blue shell-edged whiteware with an unscaloped rim and impressed lines, and a variety of transitional pearlware-whiteware ceramic sherds with cobalt blue and red transfer prints along with flow blue and hand painted underglaze patterns. The collection also includes sherds from locally produced salt glazed stoneware utility vessels. The single projectile point is made of quartz and the blade has a long transverse fracture.

There are two documented historic ruins on the Liberty Hall property:

Liberty Hall Mill [VDHR 44NE 0184] A terrestrial, open air site consisting of the remains of an early grist mill located along Swan Creek. The mill was constructed of random rubble masonry and mortar. Boulders just upstream seem to indicate the remains of a mill dam. Copies of Colonel Nicholas Cabell's "Swan Creek Mill Book" [for years 1805-1808] exist in the Cabell Family Papers MSS 38.111 at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia. See *History* for documentation on burning of Liberty Hall Mill by Union General Philip Sheridan troops.

After the Civil War manganese was discovered on part of the Liberty Hall plantation. The Mill was partly restored and equipped for ore washing. B GUY. P 53. [See the "aqueduct" in B. Guy drawing of Warminster, follows Swan Creek to the Mill, and may be part of this restoration for manganese ore washing]

Liberty Hall "Dormitory" [VDHR 44NE0186] archaeological site. Marked by a chimney fall, scattered foundations stones and some bricks and brick fragments, this is a terrestrial, open-air ruin of a single dwelling. Identified by oral history as a dwelling for unmarried members of the enslaved community at Liberty Hall plantation.

The two cemeteries are contributing elements in the district:

Liberty Hall Cemetery [44NE 0187] A well-maintained ancestral cemetery of the Cabell Family. The earliest graves are for Dr. William Cabell and Elizabeth Burks Cabell, 1774 and 1756 respectively. The cemetery was probably established with the 1756 death of Elizabeth Cabell. Includes the remains of Colonel Nicholas

Cabell, active in the Revolutionary War, 16 years Virginia Senate.

Liberty Hall Slave Cemetery This cemetery is located in a deciduous wood lot and is readily recognizable due to both marked [uninscribed fieldstone markers] and unmarked ground surface depressions with rectangular shapes oriented on northwest to southeast axes. The total number of graves likely exceeds 75. Established as a burial place for members of the enslaved community at Liberty Hall, but use of the cemetery probably continued after the abolition of slavery. Surface evidence suggests there is a high probability that the cemetery retains subsurface integrity. Known land use history of the site, and family history of the current and past property owners further support the contention that the cemetery has never been disturbed.

Blacksmith Shop (VA DHR ID: 44NE0185) This is the remains of a blacksmith shop, identified as being from the WWI – WWII period of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, located along Warminster Road and associated with the second village of Warminster that sprang up along the railroad line over the canal towpath after 1881. Several ‘shop books’ dating from the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century listing work such as horse shoeing and other forge-related details indicate that there was a blacksmith shop at Swan Creek overseen by Colonel Nicholas Cabell. On date of reconnaissance by DHR Archaeologist Tom Klatka and owner, a horse shoe was found at the site.

Significant numbers of Native American artifacts have been found in the area within the Warminster Rural Historic District dating from Pre-Contact, Early Woodland and Late Woodland periods. As noted by Virginia Department of Historic Resources Archaeologist Tom Klatka, the areas are “recommended for further study.”

There are four documented pre-historic sites in the district [VDHR 44NE 0189, 0190, 0191, 0192]:

Swan Creek Farm Levee (VA DHR ID:44NE0189) A Late Woodland (AD 900-1600) Native American Domestic Camp. A prehistoric site location rich in large lithic artifacts, including a metate (mealing stone or mortar) from this site. The site was provided by a local man who leases the land along the James River for agriculture. Debitage apparent on the ground during field inspection. See photos on accompanying CD.

Miner A (VA DHR ID: 44NE0190) An Early Woodland (1200-500BC) Native American Domestic Camp. Artifacts include Early Woodland projectile points and a biface from this site, which was provided by a local man who leases land along the James River for agriculture. Debitage apparent on the ground during field inspection.

Miner B (VA DHR ID: 44NE0191) A Pre-Contact Native American Domestic Camp. Artifacts include a celt from this site, which was provided by a local man who leases land along the James River for agriculture. Debitage apparent on the ground surface during field inspection.

Swan Creek Farm North (VA DHR ID: 44NE 0192) A Pre-Contact Native American Domestic Camp. A mano (pestle stone) was found at this site, and is part of a collection of artifacts found by a local man who leases land along the James River for agriculture. Debitage apparent on the ground surface during field inspection.

James River and Kanawha Canal (VA DHR ID: 44NE0077, 0078, 0079, 0080)

George Washington’s dream of a canal through Virginia connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River was undertaken from 1785 to 1851, supported strongly in the Legislature by Joseph Carrington Cabell. By 1840 the canal reached Lynchburg, and finally extended over 190 miles to Buchanan by 1851, replacing the flat-bottomed bateaux with faster passenger and freight service. The Civil War and the superior efficiency of the railroads ultimately destroyed the canal. Surviving elements of these engineering works are located in the district and include a canal culvert, and three canal bridges, and Canal Lock 31 (evaluated as in poor condition by Dr. William Trout.<sup>3</sup>



Midway Mill Site (De-listed from DHR 2001 prior to demolition) Now the site of the James River Wildlife Management Area. Said to have been constructed by master Italian shipwrights, the beautiful and historic Midway Mill stood on the banks of the James River on Route 743, twelve miles east of Lovington, from its construction in 1787 to its demolition in 1998. The mill was built by William H. Cabell, member of the Virginia House of Delegates, and Governor of Virginia from 1805 to 1808, years of Thomas Jefferson's presidency which saw the Aaron Burr trial, and the "Chesapeake Bay – Leopard" naval engagement off Norfolk, Virginia. Cabell was a justice on the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals for more than forty years. All of the construction of the mill: massive stone walls with granite lintels and sills, roof of heavy slates and wooden gears, was said to be excellent. Midway Mill, so called because it was the half-way point between Richmond and Lynchburg, was a landmark for passengers on the James River and Kanawha Canal, and a small settlement consisting of a passenger station, a post office and a general store grew up at the site.<sup>4</sup> William H. Cabell was at one time president of the Canal Company.

During the Civil War the mill was an important source of flour and meal for Virginians. Midway Mill was at one listed on the National Register of Historic Places, delisted upon its demolition, in 2001. The Simpson House and Mausoleum are also on this site.

Surrounded by Edgewood and Liberty Hall plantations is the historic site of the lost Town of Warminster:

The town of Warminster was originally laid out in 1789 on land owned by Colonel Nicholas Cabell along a winding road that ran up a hill in a northwesterly direction one-quarter mile from the James River and the Liberty Hall mill on Swan Creek. The town was situated fifteen miles above Scottsville and thirty miles southwest of Charlottesville. By an act of the Virginia General Assembly in 1788, the trustees of the new town were required to stake off each town lot in rectangular grid form with 26 yards facing the street and one hundred and five yards running back. The owners of lots were required to improve each lot within three years of purchase with "a dwelling house sixteen feet square with a brick or stone chimney," although this deadline was extended by another two years by the General Assembly in 1791. The town lots were all sold at auction.

The spine of the original town has come in time to be known as Route 604. The lots extended on either side of this road for approximately a quarter of a mile and were cut by a narrow cross street, the River Road, which ran parallel to the James all the way to Scottsville.<sup>5</sup> That road today is known as Route 626. The intersection of the two roads marked the town center.

There are no known paintings, drawings or photographs of Warminster in the antebellum period but there do exist two modern drawings by Briscoe Guy, a Cabell descendant, showing the plan of the town and lot numbers as originally laid out by the town's trustees in 1789. [See attachment A 1] The scale of the drawing is 1" = 500 feet. Guy worked up the plan in 1945 from original deeds in the Nelson and Amherst courthouses. However, because some of the deeds are missing, the drawing cannot be counted on for perfect accuracy. His map is strictly based on the overall size of twenty acres to be laid off in 1/2 acre lots as specified by the General Assembly in 1788. It has recently come to light that Guy drew a second map that is similar to the map of the conjectural Warminster survey he created from deed research in 1945. This second map [Attachment A 2] provides additional information, including the location of possible archaeological remains (one noted as "hole full of bricks" and numerous other possible spots shown as small blackened circles and rectangles; however, the meaning of the "x's" on this second map is not evident. This second drawing shows the possible original route of Rt. 604 (Warminster Dr.) passing closer to the front of Edgewood. It also marks other traces of old roads. A local resident, Jack Ragland, reports of bricks and brick fragments revealed when plowing at the Town of Warminster site on Warminster Road.

Briscoe Guy's deed research revealed that the early deeds for lots in the town were for commercial structures, indicating the early commercial character of the town. It is probable that the great majority of people in the larger Warminster community lived on nearby plantations outside of town and came to Warminster on business. That Warminster did not become primarily a residential community would help to explain why

there was not a school or a church in the town in this early period, although the General Assembly passed acts calling for lotteries to establish each. There are references in secondary sources that the population of Warminster reached 500 inhabitants in the heyday of the bateau era, rivaling Lynchburg's population in that same period, but this assertion cannot be proved. We do know that over 265, possibly as many as 600, petitioners asked the General Assembly to incorporate the town, and thus identified themselves as stakeholders in its future economic vitality.<sup>6</sup> We also know that the population of the town and Warminster's economic vitality declined precipitously during the period 1820 to 1850.

Besides the information gleaned from deed research in Guy's drawings, several 19<sup>th</sup> century maps, most notably the 1818 Bishop Madison Map of Virginia, the Claudius Crozet's 1824 canal map #17, the S. Augustus Mitchell 1832 Map of Virginia and Maryland, and the 1863 Gilmer map of Nelson County, drawn by General J. F. Gilmer, Chief Engineer of the Confederate Engineer Bureau, provide descriptive information of varying quality on Warminster as a living town. Warminster is also described in graphic detail in Joseph Martin's 1835 Gazetteer. Taken together, Claudius Crozet's 1824 canal map [Attachment B] and Martin's Gazetteer of 1835 are most telling in describing the changing built environment of Warminster during the period that witnessed the end of the bateau era and the advent of the James River and Kanawha Canal.

Crozet's map may well show the "as built" condition of fourteen standing buildings, their orientation, relative size and approximate locations. It is presumed to be more accurate than the two Guy drawings. The buildings at Edgewood depicted in the Crozet map to the north and west of the compact townscape appear to be the main house, possibly the Tucker Cottage and one additional structure that is difficult to identify, given that Mutual Assurance policies of 1813 and 1816 for Edgewood show several buildings that have not survived. Crozet's map does not show the River Road intersecting the town at its center, but that is likely because his intent was to show the canal along with existing buildings and features in close proximity to it. He doesn't show that same road on his Tye River to Warminster map either, which road certainly existed on that stretch given all of the early Cabell houses along the way. The scale of the Crozet map is not obvious but may possibly be deduced from his carefully delineated mile markers.

Only eleven years later, Joseph Martin in his New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia described Warminster in 1835 as a village consisting of "but 3 dwelling houses and 2 store houses and a masonic hall nearly in ruins, which is sometimes used as a place of worship. A classical school has been annually kept here, or in the immediate vicinity." Martin counted the town population as 15 white people and 10 colored and reported that one physician has generally resided here. Martin noted that the country which was once tributary to Warminster now carried its support to other places with greater natural advantages such as New Glasgow and Amherst Court House, Lovingsston and New Market, Bent Creek and other places. Warminster consequently "has for many years been retrograding in the number of its inhabitants and houses; many of the lots have been purchased by the proprietor of the estate, in the midst of which it is situated, and have been thrown into the adjacent fields." The town no longer served as a tobacco inspection station. He did not expect that village to change in size with the opening of the James River and Kanawha Canal. Nevertheless, remarked Martin, Warminster's situation remained "picturesque in a high degree."

*From a cliff opposite, on the right bank of the river, is an extensive and interesting view, taking in the fertile valley, winding for several miles above and below, with the seats on the adjacent heights; the small village half concealed by trees in the midst of the cultivated plain below, the near prospect embraced by ranges of mountains beyond and the Blue Ridge, predominant over the whole, in the distant horizon.*<sup>7</sup>

The only visible remains of Warminster today are the historic buildings, structures, sites and objects of Edgewood plantation, which occupy the original north end lot of the town (#36) and beyond. Except for the Edgewood property, the site of the town of Warminster has been an open field in agricultural use since 1849. In that year, the owner of Edgewood, Joseph C. Cabell, completed the process of buying the lots on which Warminster once stood, moving or dismantling buildings or structures that were still standing and merging the vacant lots with the adjoining agricultural fields of his plantation.<sup>8</sup>

No archaeological investigation has yet been undertaken to determine if or where any intact archaeological remains of the 1788-1849 town may still exist below ground within the town precinct.

Property tax records for the owners and buildings on the Town of Warminster's 36 town lots are currently being examined by the Nelson County Historical Society in the archives of the Virginia State Library. It is expected that the Nelson records for the tax year 1815 and for the subsequent period of 1820-1850 will provide a fuller picture of the specific locations, construction dates, owners, uses and other information on Warminster's historic buildings during this period, as a basis for further archival research and archaeological investigation.

Site of Masonic Temple, later Swedenborgian Church, near Edgewood, Warminster Drive.

Colonel Nicholas Cabell and his brothers were active members of the Masonic Lodge that Col. Nicholas had organized in Warminster in 1791. The building stood northwest of Edgewood on what is now Route 604. In 1820 the lodge moved to New Market [Norwood]. Dr. William Cabell's great grandson, Nathaniel Francis Cabell [1807-1891] succeeded to the Liberty Hall property, and returned to Warminster in 1832. He had been raised by his mother, Margaret Venable Cabell, as a Presbyterian, but he became acquainted with "The New Church" or the Swedenborgian Church, a faith that became popular in America in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. John Chapman ("Johnny Appleseed") and Transcendental philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson were students of New Church philosophy. Nathaniel Francis was baptized into the church in 1842, and his wife and children followed him into the faith.<sup>9</sup> Mary Early, a Swedenborgian, remembers attending services in Warminster:

*The meetings were held in a Church near Mr. [N. F.] Cabell's home, built by his mother and himself, I believe, and originally intended as a Presbyterian Church.<sup>10</sup>*

The 1937 Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory listed the Swedenborgian Church as being "1/4 mile west of Warminster, Va., on Route #604, on the east side of the road, opposite Edgewood." The WPA report lists the building date as circa 1836, and makes the point that the timbers and lumber for the church were cut and hand-hewn on the place, the walls plaster with carved woodwork, and nine windows. The report further states that "Philip Cabell" [Nathaniel Francis Cabell's son, Philip Barraud Cabell] "preached here while living at 'Edgewood.'"<sup>11</sup>

Oral history has it that this building was Colonel Nicholas Cabell's Masonic Lodge, turned into a church in the 1830's. Joseph Martin's 1835's description of Warminster notes "...a masonic hall nearly in ruins, which is sometimes used as a place of worship." Briscoe Guy's March 3, 1945 map the site is listed as "Ch[urch]", but on Guy's November 15<sup>th</sup> map of the same year he shows it as "Masonic Lodge," inviting the speculation.

Other Potential Resources in the district, include houses and two churches of the African American community that grew up around Warminster and along Mayo's Creek:

The first settlers took the choicest land along the transportation corridor of the James River, but the the District is bounded on the west by the "Old Warminster – Hebron Church Road," the boundary of the "back" of Edgewood, Bon Aire and the Midway Mills sites. Oral history, according to Professor K. Edward Lay, Cary D. Langhorne Professor of History Emeritus, University of Virginia:

About the center of the Warminster-Hebron Church Road, in its western end on the ridge between the two branches of Mayo's Creek, was the property known as "Belmont." (See also "Midway Mill" site) The creek was named for Col. William Mayo 1684-1744 who owned 1400 acres along that creek. The land then derived from 1798 acres conveyed to Joseph C. Cabell in 1823 by the trustees of the estate of his brother Governor William H. Cabell 1772-1853. Stone chimneys and what appears to be an ice-house remain on the Belmont property. Its personal property inventory included horses, cattle, flax seed, corn, and oats. 1180 acres of this property was inherited by J. Grattan Cabell at the death in 1856 of his uncle, state senator Joseph Carrington

Cabell of Edgewood. In 1863, the then 1166.5-acre Belmont tract was sold to the firm of the Haxall and Crenshaw Company of Richmond, Virginia. In 1879, those acres were sold at public auction to Richard Barton Haxall of the firm and his wife Octavia of Orange County, Virginia and sold eleven months later to Germaine F. Simpson and wife Emma, who acquired the Midway Mill tract three years later. In 1882 the Simpsons sold 150 acres of the Belmont tract for manganese mining rights to John Stambaugh of Youngstown, Ohio.

The ruins of “Slave church in the woods” and several vernacular houses are found along this road. Tradition has it that enslaved people attended church here, and after the Civil War were either given land or through the process of share cropping were able to save the money to buy their own land and farms.<sup>12</sup> [See Map, “Old Warminster Road, Attachment C]

Trail’s End/Tompkins House. A hewn log house, probably originally used as a slave quarters for Belmont, and after the Civil War used for housing black workers by the owners of Midway Mill or other Cabell properties. The existing 16' by 16' V-notched hewn log house has a stone gable-end chimney with brick necking. Tapered wood shingles were found in the attic. The black Tompkins family who lived there raised 11 children. In 1900 they added a two-story frame addition, and the log house acquired a one-story frame shed on its chimney end. There are at least 10 family members buried in the cemetery there – one gravestone is hand-carved with initials. The significance of this Tompkins property is that it is the low point on the Warminster-Hebron Church Road, after traversing by several other African American houses and the African American Baptist Church on the ridge top. This low point is where the road passes through the northern branch of Mayo's Creek gap in the hills. There the road traversed the creek prior to climbing Horse Mountain to the church. An old spring is located there and wagon tracks can still be seen in the bedrock of that creek. Another log house of the black Calin family was just beyond that gap and that of the black Mayo family and its unmarked graves were just prior to crossing the creek.<sup>13</sup>

#### Second Baptist Church [“Slave Church in the Woods”]

The ruins of this early Baptist church congregation of Nelson County are located west of the Edgewood/Bon Aire properties. In 1860 these African American churchgoers purchased the white Methodist Episcopal South Church (built ca. 1848) which they then called the Hebron African Church, for the sum of \$450 (see St. Hebron Church below). The deed, filed with the Nelson County Court in 1866, specified that “both white ministers and negro ministers be allowed to preach.”<sup>14</sup> Later, the congregation moved to St. John's church in Norwood.

The horizontal weatherboarded frame church contained a standing seam metal gable roof with a small louvered gable-roofed belfry on top. Hand-made stylized wooden Victorian Gothic lintels were over the doors and windows on the interior. The two exterior doors (for men and women) in the gable end probably led directly to side aisles with hand-made wooden pews in the center. On the opposite gable end, it had a frame projecting apse underpinned with stone. Wooden cornice returns were on the gable ends and alternating diagonal boards in its tympanum. The rectangular interior contained two center square wooden posts and three rectangular windows on each side. The interior had walls of vertical wooden matchboards (painted a red color in its wainscote), wood board flooring, and a flat wooden ceiling. The vernacular church commanded the top of the ridge with views of the countryside. □□ So the church itself is probably late 19th or early 20th century, but the congregation is most likely older, perhaps just after the Civil War<sup>15</sup>

St. Hebron Church Located on Old Warminster-Hebron church Road, and known as the mother church of the African American community of Southern Nelson County before the construction of the St. John's Church in Norwood in the 1880's, this frame church has a cornerstone stating that this church was built in 1848 and remodeled in 1948. The original building, said to have been a white Methodist church was given to the black congregation in the 1860's. Originally Gothic Revival in style, is the rectangular central part of the present structure – the front and back are additions, with new roofing and siding overall. The stained glass windows are probably 20th century and the most notable exterior feature. If the center portion and its glass window locations are original, the stained glass would have been later.

### Vernacular Frame Houses, Old Warminster Rd

The ruins of several vernacular frame houses of the African American community along Old Warminster Road include houses identified as the Mayo House, the Early House or “Bee Hive House”, Robert Cox/Normal Scott House, and the Lizzie Calin House. 16

Other potential resources in the District include sites associated with the second village of Warminster  
This second village developed along the railroad line that replaced the canal after 1881 including the sites of the C & O Railroad Station and related workers’ dwellings, general store and post office, blacksmith shop and the Warminster Grade School. Only the blacksmith shop has been recorded to the reconnaissance level. (See above)

Warminster School circa 1930. A vernacular frame construction building typical of two-room Virginia schoolhouses. The grade school was consolidated, along with small area schools in Rockfish Depot, Faber, Wingina and other towns during a general consolidation process from the 1930’s to the 1950’s.<sup>17</sup>

### Warminster General Store and Post Office

The post office was located in a general store which sat near the C&O Railroad track. This country store sold everything: gasoline, clothes, shoes, foodstuffs including beans, oats, and flour in bulk. The owner of the store was Mr. Channing Moon. The last mail delivery to the Warminster Post office was on April 30, 1958. The store closed in 1966.<sup>18</sup>

### Warminster C&O Railroad Station Site and related RR workers dwellings

Warminster was an important stopping point on the C&O RR from where iron ore mined nearby was shipped. The Railroad station, circa 1892, was built along the lines of “C & O Standard Station No.3,” the most important of all the railroad’s designs. The C&O Historic Society notes in its description of the building that it was simple, but “incorporated enough decorations to make it quite pleasant looking and able to fit in with the ‘Victorian’ era of architecture very well.”

In 1907 the Warminster Station was serviced not only by freight trains, but by passenger cars which also carried mail. There was a side track to load and unload local products such as timber, iron ore and apples, and a water tank that was fed by a four-inch intake pipe into the James River. The C & O assigned a stationary steam boiler engineer in Warminster to operate and maintain the system, and provided him with a dwelling at the station site.<sup>19</sup>

**Significance Statement:** Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the proposed district. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Please list all sources of information. Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board

The Warminster Rural Historic District is potentially eligible for the state and national registers under Criterion A for its association with major settlement, commercial, industrial and transportation developments along the James River as a “parent plantation” from which European and African-American settlement spread, an integral link of the James River and Kanawha Canal system, and and into the twentieth century as an active railroad depot, important shipping point for iron ore, lumber and locally grown apples. It is also closely associated with events of Sheridan’s James River campaign of 1865 in Central Virginia.

The District is potentially eligible under Criterion B for its rich historical associations with Dr. William Cabell, founding settler and prominent 18<sup>th</sup> century personage of Nelson [then Amherst] County, and Joseph Carrington Cabell, Virginia politician active in the General Assembly for decades, and Thomas Jefferson’s right hand in the founding and funding of the University of Virginia. Other notable Virginians who figure largely in the District’s history are Samuel Jordan Cabell, Colonel Nicholas Cabell, Colonel William Cabell, Nathaniel Francis Cabell and St. George Tucker., and Robert Rives.

The District is potentially eligible under Criterion C for its inclusion of two architecturally significant National Register Properties, Edgewood (VDHR 062-0004) and Bon Aire (VDHR 062-0089)

*The District merits further archaeological investigation. Archaeological testing could confirm that the District is potentially eligible under Criterion D in that further study of archaeological sites in the District is likely to yield information important in pre-history and also in history.*

#### History:

The Warminster area is the cradle of Nelson County’s history both before and after European contact and settlement. Native Americans had been living on the lands of the James River for several thousand years before European settlement. The Monacans, an Eastern Sioux tribe, dominated the James River Valley from the falls and Richmond to the Blue Ridge.

The wide and continuous bottomlands, the river and forest teeming with fish and game proved a felicitous environment for Native Americans, and for the European pioneers who displaced them. After Jamestown, European settlers established plantations in Tidewater, then pressed farther inland, up the rivers, especially the James, and the Native Americans receded before them.

Dr. William Cabell (1700-1774) of Warminster, England, and his cousin William Mayo, joined a flood of emigrants leaving England for America and the Caribbean in the 1720s. While Mayo originally settled in the Caribbean, Cabell landed in the Chesapeake region of Virginia in 1723. Upon arrival, the enterprising Cabell found the tidewater area to be primarily settled and chose to pioneer further west where “vast realms of territory” awaited enterprising men in the Commonwealth’s interior.

Cabell was later joined in Virginia by Mayo, who was appointed by the House of Burgesses as the surveyor of Goochland County in 1728.. In addition to his work in Goochland County, Mayo also helped to lay out plans for the City of Richmond and other area settlements. Cabell, a resident of Goochland, assisted Mayo and learned survey skills that he would use later in life. After a brief stint in England from 1735 to 1741, Cabell returned to the Virginia Colony and started to amass a substantial family territory in what would eventually become Nelson County (Nelson was created from Amherst County in 1808).

Dr. William Cabell’s quest for land was aided by his survey work, and eventually Cabell became the assistant surveyor of Albemarle County (from 1746-1754). His son, William Cabell, Jr., held the same position (from 8/26/2015

1753-1761) and also served as the chief surveyor of Amherst County (from 1761-1777). Through their work as surveyors, the family became intimately familiar with the area's terrain, allowing them to choose the best plots of land for themselves. Between 1730 and 1734 Dr. William Cabell "chopped out" various tracts of land on both sides of the James River from "Fish Pond" above Howardsville to Riverville in Amherst County, a distance of over twenty miles, comprising thousands of acres.<sup>20</sup> Many of these plots were located along the James River, which served as the area's principal transportation route. The majority of this acquired land, known collectively as the "Cabell Homeland," was located along the James River in southern Nelson and northwestern Buckingham counties.

The doctor had claim to several thousand acres. Three of each fifty acres had to be developed, impossible for one man, even one man with a daughter and four sons. As these children married and started families of their own, Dr. Cabell divided his riverfront land and settled them each on their own farm.

This still left land to be developed. Dr. Cabell wanted to bring settlers to this part of the country. This he did by means of the "head right" system, bringing immigrants from England, renting tracts of land to them. The Cabell Family Papers at the University of Virginia's Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library contains several original of Dr. Cabell's "indentures" with his tenants.<sup>21</sup> Dr. Cabell claims to have brought over one thousand people to the area, and settled them throughout what is now Nelson, Amherst, Albemarle, Buckingham and Fluvanna counties.<sup>22</sup>

In 1742 Dr. William Cabell, and his wife Elizabeth Burks Cabell (1706-1756), moved from Goochland to a plot in Amherst County along the James River, farther up the James than any European had settled before. On the new site they established Swan Creek Plantation and constructed a large Georgian-style dwelling, which was one of the first plantation seats constructed in the area. Dr. Cabell's vision always included commerce, and he built the first mill, the first hospital, the first tavern and store in the area. Dr. Cabell called the place Warminster after his home in England. To carry his tobacco and extra produce to market, along with that of his neighbors and kin, Dr. Cabell started a line of bateaux to Westham, a port just above Richmond.<sup>23</sup>

As his four sons, Colonel William Cabell, Sr. (1730-1798), Colonel Joseph Cabell (1732-1798), Colonel John Cabell (1735-1815), and Colonel Nicholas Cabell (1750-1803), reached maturity, Cabell bequeathed land to them, beginning a dynasty that would generate some of the area's most influential and prominent citizens.

The sons built houses along the James, including Midway, site of a large and imposing stone mill, known as Midway Mills. ) Midway was William H. Cabell's farm where he lived from 1801-1809/10 The property was part of Dr. William Cabell's original holdings, which were turned over to his son [Colonel] Nicholas along with Dr. Cabell's home Swan Creek/Liberty Hall. Nicholas in May 1799 gave his son William H. Cabell 800 acres of this property. When William H. Cabell married Elizabeth in 1795, the couple had first lived with her parents, Col. and Mrs. William Cabell II at Union Hill. But in January 1801, William H. and his wife moved to "my own house at Midway". Unfortunately, Elizabeth died the following November. In 1805, William married Agnes Sarah Bell Gamble, and they resided at Midway when Cabell was not in Richmond serving in the government. In 1809 or 1810, Governor William H. Cabell moved directly across the James River to Repton/Montevideo, which he had purchased from his first cousin Joseph Cabell. When William found himself in financial straits after standing security for a friend who went bankrupt, he found it necessary to sell both Montevideo and Midway. Midway was apparently bought by his brother Joseph C. Cabell in 1823. Joseph never lived at Midway, and upon dying childless in 1856, he left the farm to William H.'s son, Dr. John Grattan Cabell. Grattan immediately moved from Richmond to Midway, but after several years, he sold it and returned to Richmond. Nicholas Cabell, Sr.'s grandson, Nathaniel Francis Cabell, wrote that most of Nicholas's papers were burnt at Midway House.<sup>24</sup> Although Midway was demolished and sold for building material in 1998, the site is worthy of further archaeological investigation.

The youngest son, Colonel Nicholas Cabell, inherited Swan Creek Plantation after Dr. William Cabell's death in 1774 (which he renamed "Liberty Hall" to prove his patriotism during the Revolutionary War), continuing his family's occupation of the original settlement site on the James River.

Tobacco was Virginia's cash crop, and by law had to be inspected before being shipped to market. British laws forbade weighing and inspection of tobacco above Richmond, so above Fall Line tobacco was transported by boat to Westham and then by wagon to Richmond for inspection and shipping to England, the major market for the crop.

The old doctor died in 1774, two years before the start of the American Revolution, but his sons were active in the conflict, organizing and leading patriots from Amherst.

*During the Revolution local patriots formed Committees of Safety. These committees formed shadow governments in the thirteen colonies, and gradually wrested power from royal colonial officials*<sup>25</sup>.

Dr. Cabell's eldest son, Colonel William Cabell (1730-1798) was the only member of the Virginia Committee of Safety from the Piedmont Counties. Early in 1775 the Virginia counties each appointed a Revolutionary Committee of twenty county leaders. The Committee's main aim was to organize a battalion of "minute-men" to drill and be ready for regular service, "at a minute's notice." Colonel William Cabell, who had been a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses since 1756, was chairman of the first committee of Amherst. He nominated his younger brother Nicholas, to be the Captain of Amherst's minute-men.

Called "[hunting] shirt men" by the British, these country soldiers were "a sturdy band of sharpshooters each man of whom... while marching at doublequick could cleave with his rifle ball a squirrell at a distance of three hundred yards."<sup>26</sup> Cabell's company engaged the British south of Norfolk December 9, 1775 in the Battle of Great Bridge. The battle, known as "a second Bunker's Hill affair" lasted twenty-five minutes, and not one Virginian was lost. The Battle of Great Bridge Dec 9, 1775 lasted 25 minutes, not one Virginian was lost.<sup>27</sup> The January 1776 Convention of Virginia, with war approaching, required additional forces for the better protection of the colony. Amherst had to furnish one company of light riflemen, a captain, lieutenant, an ensign and seventy-four non commissioned officers ready for marching orders by March 4. William Cabell called on his son Samuel Jordan Cabell to form the first Rifle Company. They rendezvoused at old Keys Church (Fairmont church in Nelson County), and went by canoe to Richmond, marched to Williamsburg, arriving March 24, 1776.<sup>28</sup> Later Colonel Nicholas Cabell served as a state senator from 1786 to 1801, and went on to found the town of Warminster.

In 1783, with the end of the American Revolution, and planters of the Middle James were free to weigh and inspect tobacco. By 1788 the port at Swan Creek was floating a total of seven- to eight-hundred hogsheads a year. In that same year Colonel Nicholas Cabell and other landowners petitioned the General Assembly to establish a Town of Warminster on 20 acres of Colonel Nicholas' land at the mouth of Swan Creek. The community that had grown up around the parent plantation of Swan Creek/Liberty Hall was such a robust trading hub that there were over 300, possibly as many as 600 petitioners to incorporate the town. Half-acre lots measuring twenty-six by one-hundred and five yards, lining the road from the river, were sold at public auction, with the proceeds going to Cabell, who served as a trustee. The town was laid out along the road that lead from the river, and was bisected by the road that Dr. Cabell had surveyed and supervised the construction of in 1745, that led from the Tye River to Scottsville.<sup>29</sup> Deeds stipulated that a sixteen-foot by sixteen-foot dwelling must be erected within three years, although a two-year extension was often issued due to a scarcity of building materials.

The act also called for Colonel Nicholas to build a tobacco warehouse and inspection station just north of Swan Creek on "Cabell's Great Lowgrounds."<sup>30</sup> In the Mutual Assurance document of 1805 we see two "Wooden Ware Houses" and one "Scale House" referenced. (See Accompanying CD) Edgewood, referred to as "The Lot" in period documents, was located at the westernmost edge of the town.



[Note: The “Liberty Hall” Plantation and “Edgewood” were one farm and were inherited by successive generations of Cabells.]

Once established, Warminster thrived, and became the center of a flourishing agricultural district, and containing a rapidly growing town which was destined to influence the development of a large portion Piedmont Virginia through its trading activities. The town’s prominence is revealed on an 1832 *Map of Virginia and Maryland* by S. Augustus Mitchell, which marks only the courthouse at Lovington and Warminster as place names in Nelson County. [Interestingly, the name still appears on the USGS Howardsville Quadrant topographical map.] Warminster featured four- to five-hundred residents by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> The mill, ordinary, store and bateaux that Dr. Cabell and his sons had established served as more than a family seat; Warminster became a thriving tobacco port whose trading activities attracted men of means such as wealthy merchant Robert Rives, builder of Edgewood.

A year after the founding of the town, Alexander Donald, of Donald and Burton, one of England’s largest commission houses, took special notice of the Warminster warehouse’s tobacco, requesting to buy all of Warminster’s product for his firm. In 1790 Robert Rives moved to Warminster, buying the westernmost lot in the town, and securing Donald’s product for himself. Rives eventually controlled virtually all of the tobacco shipments in the area.<sup>32</sup> Rives married Colonel William Cabell’s [of Union Hill, in “New Market” or Norwood.] daughter Margaret Jordan Cabell.

By 1791 the streets had been laid out and the warehouse constructed. Permission for lotteries to raise a school and church were granted by the General Assembly.<sup>33</sup> Trade was thriving in this growing agricultural community – quite a change from Dr. Cabell’s ‘chopped out’ entry into the wild untamed frontier fifty years before. Warminster was a vital commercial center, important to community life, internal commerce, and politics in the colony, and then the Commonwealth of Virginia. The town is found on both the 1818 Bishop Madison Map of Virginia, and on S. Augustus Mitchell’s 1832 Map of Virginia and Maryland.

Freemasonry had its start in this part of Virginia in Warminster. The movement was dedicated to religious toleration and liberty—principles that the fraternity helped spread through the American colonies at the time of the Revolution. Colonel Nicholas Cabell petitioned the Grand Masonic Lodge of Virginia in Richmond for permission to organize a “George Lodge” at Warminster in 1791.<sup>34</sup> Nicholas and his brother, the Virginia politician William H. Cabell, were active members. Wilson Cary Nicholas, a Virginia politician who served in the U. S. Senate, and as Virginia’s 19<sup>th</sup> Governor, was also a member of this lodge.<sup>35</sup>

All was seemingly going well, but the next three decades would see the decline of the Town of Warminster. Most of the town was dedicated to the thriving bateau trade in tobacco and supplies, not to domestic life.<sup>36</sup> Amherst grew more settled, and a new County, Nelson, was formed in 1807. But the years 1806-1808 saw a succession of droughts and floods that were devastating to crops, including the precious cash crop, tobacco. Government inspection was halted at the Warminster inspection station, and may have halted altogether. By 1794, Colonel Nicholas’ brother Colonel William Cabell Sr. had established a tobacco inspection station farther the James River, where it met the Tye River at New Market (Now Norwood). The Tye was navigable for 25 to 30 miles. In 1812 the General Assembly acted to further improve navigation on the Tye River. Tobacco agent and merchant Robert Rives was married to Colonel William’s daughter Margaret Jordan Rives. These factors may have influenced the trade in tobacco to flow away from Warminster and to New Market.<sup>37</sup>

In 1820 the George Lodge No. 32 had leave to migrate to New Market, another sign that Warminster was losing influence. Further, the roads leading to Warminster were neglected, making it difficult to get produce to the depot.<sup>38</sup>

In 1835 Gazetteer Joseph Martin notes:

*Though called a village, it consists at present of but 3 dwelling houses and 2 store houses and a masonic hall nearly in ruins, which is sometimes used as a place of worship. A classical school has been annually kept here, or in the immediate vicinity.* <sup>39</sup> [Martin page 241.]

In 1849 Joseph C. Cabell, for many years a member of the General Assembly, trustee of the University of Virginia, president of the James River and Kanawha Canal and master of Edgewood plantation the remaining twelve unoccupied lots in Warminster. He had the buildings removed and reverted the land to farmland.<sup>40</sup>

By 1840 Dr. William Cabell's and Colonel Nicholas Cabell's fleet of bateaux plying the James with passengers and freight were replaced with packetboats and the canal boats of the James River and Kanawha Canal – the project of the next generation of Cabells – William H. and Joseph Carrington Cabell. It took Dr. Cabell's bateaux five days to make the trip from Warminster to Richmond. When the James River and Kanawha Canal was built, that time shrank to one day. With the canal's completion to Lynchburg in 1840, Warminster ceased to function as a tobacco port. Joseph C. Cabell's vision of a waterway extending to the Ohio River, carrying passengers and freight, ironically hastened the destruction of the town. The canal era of Warminster's history is tangibly evident today in three recorded canal bridge sites and a canal culvert site. [VDHR 44NE 0077, 0078,0079,0080]

During the Civil War railroads and canal works were a major target of Union Generals Grant, Sheridan and Merritt. In March of 1865, beginning his James River Valley campaign, Sheridan ordered his troops to Scottsville, and to march along the James River Canal to New Market [Norwood] and demolish canal works as they went. William D. Cabell formed a Nelson County Home Guard to destroy bridges across the James at Hardwicksville [Wingina] and Diugiudsville [Bent Creek].<sup>41</sup> In the Appendix of Briscoe Guy's 1947 study of Warminster Hartwell Cabell, then owner of Edgewood relates how the Liberty hall Mill was burned:

*My father [Philip Barraud Cabell], who was home on a furlough, was awakened by some of the servants who told him that 'the Yankees were coming over the mountain.' He concluded that their purpose was to get over the James River...so as to open a way for an attack on Richmond on the south side of the River. He got up and rode on horseback to what is now Wingina, where there was a large old-fashion [sic] wooden bridge over the river, it being the only bridge within a great many miles. This bridge he burned, and then went on to join his army. The river happened to be quite high and unfordable at the time, and the destruction of the bridge made it impossible for the troops to get across the river. In retaliation for my father's burning the bridge, the Union soldiers burned the old mill.* <sup>42</sup>

The canal was never fully rehabilitated after the Civil War. Joseph C. Cabell fought hard for canal in the Legislature., but floods of 1841, '42, '43, financial irregularities, the Civil War and torrential floods again in 1870 and 1877 finally killed it.

The river gave up its hegemony over transport in 1878 with the creation of the Richmond and Alleghany Railway Company. In 1881 the canal towpath was used as the rail bed for a railroad from Richmond to Clifton Forge, but the coming of the railroads liberated faster transport from adhering solely to navigable waterways.<sup>43</sup>

In the 1890's the C & O Railroad acquired the Richmond and Alleghany Railway company, and the towpath rail bed. The railroad renewed interest in Warminster, and a small settlement began to grow.<sup>44</sup> Soon after, the C & O erected a station at Warminster, built according to a standard station design popular between 1892 and 1908. The trains carried passengers and freight. The railroad played a large part in keeping what remained of Warminster alive. The station was open and very active until the late 1950's or early 1960's, and was noted as having "reached the height of its glory" during World War I as an important shipping point for iron ore that was mined nearby. Dr. William Cabell and his sons William and Joseph, along with Thomas Jefferson, had invested in the Bettie Martin mine in North Garden as early as 1771.<sup>45</sup> Iron was not the only mineral mined in the Warminster area. Shipped to England for use in making chlorine gas, manganese was

mined near the Bugley property in Warminster, and at another “Cabell mine in Nelson beginning in 1868 and 1869, and produced seven thousand tons of washed ore from open-pit mines. Production fell off after World War I, but the Cabell and Bugley mines were still explored by the Bureau of Mines in 1942.<sup>46</sup>

The Warminster station is estimated to have closed between 1959 and 1964.<sup>47</sup> The C & O Railroad, a major coal hauler, merged into the CSX system in 1987. The station had a side-track for cargo loading and unloading. Thousands of barrels of apples, and pulpwood from local lumber operations were shipped from the station, and mail bags were picked up there.<sup>48</sup> Moon’s store, near the station, was part of the life of this new Warminster. Coal continues to rumble past Warminster today on the [now] CSX trains from Clifton Forge to Norfolk.

**Sponsor** (Individual and/or organization, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please use a separate sheet.)


Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>	Nelson County Historical Society		
	(Name)	Lovington	VA
	P.O. Box 474		22949
	(Address)	(City)	(State) (Zip Code)
	nchsua@gmail.com	434-263-8400	
	(Email Address)	(Daytime telephone including area code)	

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: Robert A. Carter, President

Daytime Telephone: (434-263-4056) Email Address: robcart@gmail.com

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form)

Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/>	2938 Cabell Rd Wingina 24599		
Ms. X Miss <input type="checkbox"/>	Cabell Smith	(Name)	(Firm)
Mailing Address: 1167 Fiske Street Pacific Palisades, CA 90272			
	(Address)	(City)	(State) (Zip Code)
	(Email Address)	(Daytime telephone including area code)	
Applicant's Signature:			Date: June 28, 2015

**Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. X Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. <input type="checkbox"/>	County Administrator		
Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Hon. <input type="checkbox"/>	Stephen A. Carter	(Name)	(Position)
Nelson County	P.O. Box 336		
(Locality)	VA	22949	434-263-7000
Lovington			
(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this district.

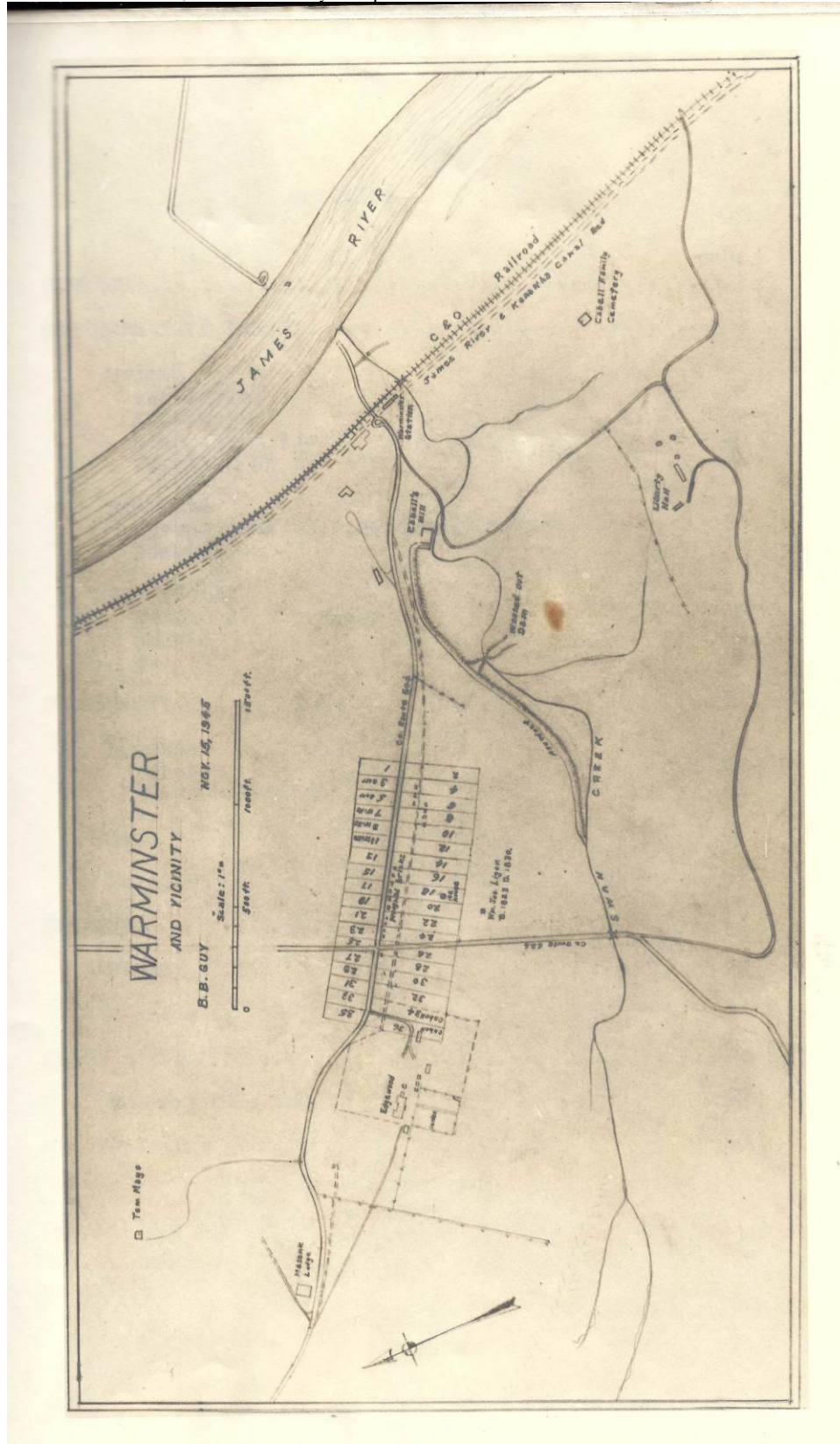
The Warminster Rural Historic District presents a confluence of sites rich in architectural, archaeological and cultural evidence of continued human habitation on the James River in Nelson County from prehistoric times through the 19<sup>th</sup> and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the "cradle of Nelson County" with such important personages of Dr. William Cabell, Joseph Carrington Cabell and St. George Tucker residing, and now resting within the District, it is worthy of preservation and deserving of further study, documentation, and an evaluation of its eligibility for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places. Archaeological remains, which appear in abundance, could have significant research potential, and a high cultural value in connecting us to the lifeways and habitat of the generations who came before us. If deemed eligible, the Nelson County Historical Society will seek the support of Nelson County and the Department of Historic Resources in funding an archeological survey and National Register nomination of the district through DHR's survey and planning cost share program.

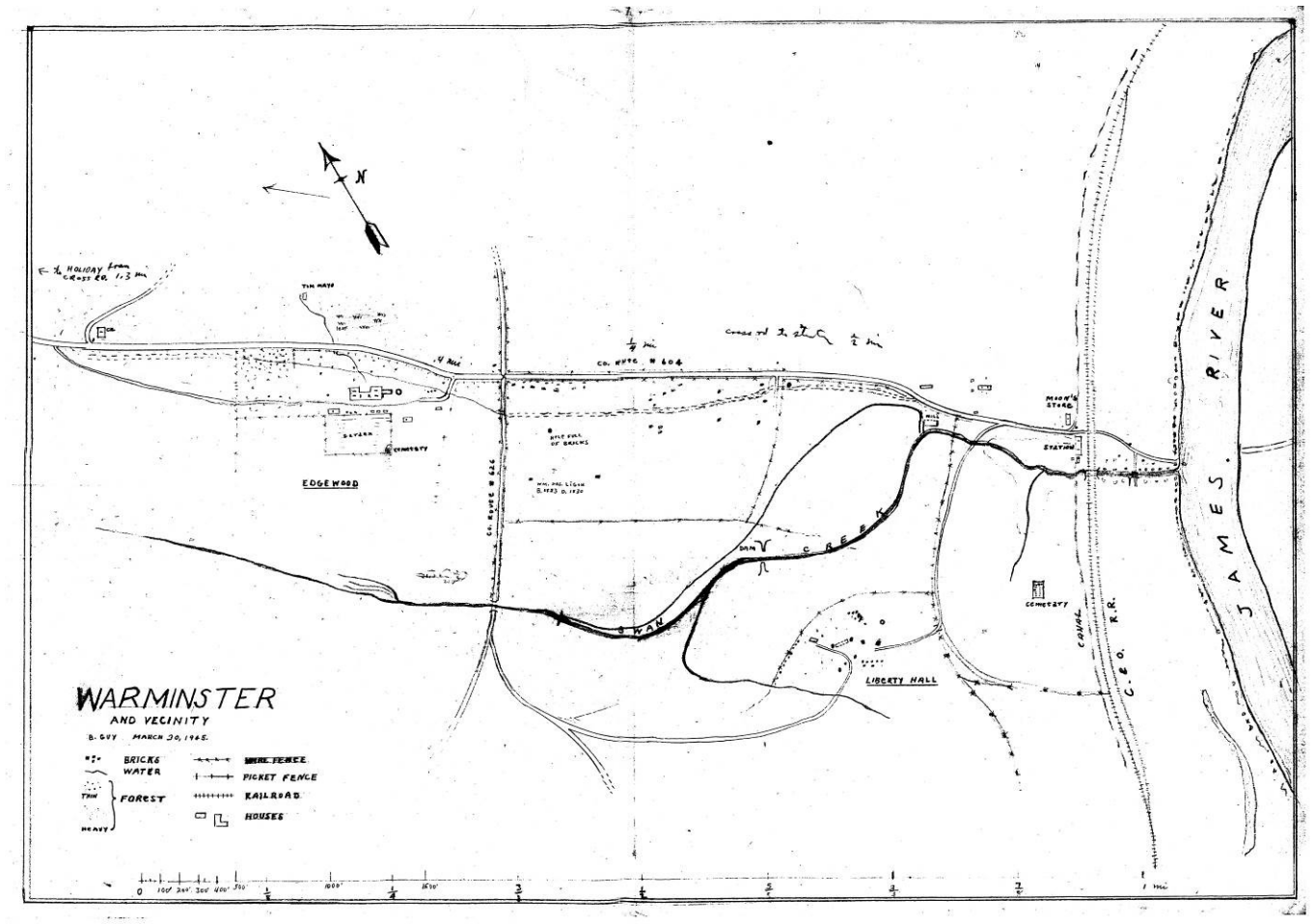
Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes ☐ No ☐

Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes X ☐ No ☐

ATTACHMENTS:

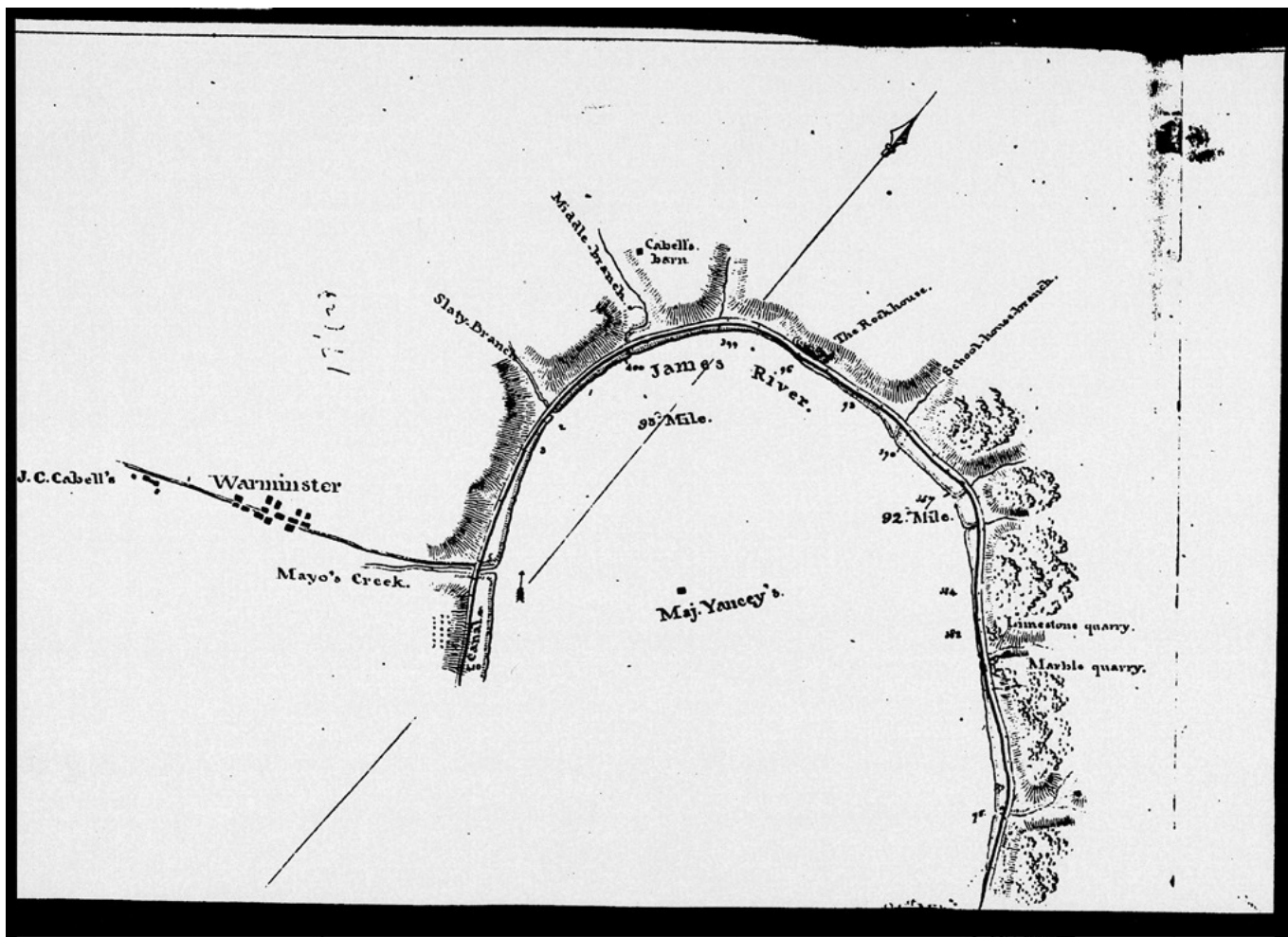
Attachment A 1, Briscoe Guy Map of Warminster November 15, 1945







Attachment B: Claudius Crozet "Seventeenth map of the lateral canal in the valley of James River, according to the Survey, 1824, Library of Virginia



Attachment C Map Old Warminster Rd



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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_H.\\_Cabell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_H._Cabell)

#### Further Resources:

UVA SPECIAL COLLECTIONS 38.111 "CABELL II"

Cabell Family Papers contains the following items pertaining to Colonel Nicholas Cabell's Mill, Store & Blacksmith Shop

#### BOX 1

1782-83 Account Book

1784-94 Nicholas Cabell Account Book, a bound volume, a store ledger, linen, brandy, etc. [inside cover: "Nicholas Cabell Book Prices, the July 27, 1776"]

#### BOX 3

1804-1805 Warminster Mill Book

1804-05 [Cotton] Ginn Book

1804 Grain Book

1805 Account Book

1805 Wheat & Flour Book

1805-06 Mill Book

1806-07 Swan Creek Account Book

1807 Day Book Swan Creek Mills

#### BOX 6

1808 Account Book [Blacksmith]

1808-09 Nicholas Cabell's Blotter [smith shop]

#### Virginia Department of Historic Resources:

James River and Kanawha Canal VDHR 44NE 0077, 0078,0079,0080

#### Color printed "8" X "10" photographs:

Edgewood Outbuildings: Dairy, Smokehouse, Dovecote

Edgewood: Ruin of Icehouse

Edgewood: "Tucker Cottage"

Bon Aire: Front view of house

Warminster: Crossroads Rte 626/604

Warminster: Lane approaching Edgewood showing corner crib  
Warminster: View South from Bon Aire overlooking low grounds  
Bon Aire, James River, Railroad, following river on old towpath road bed

Warminster Rural Historic District Photos, maps, etc. CD

Edgewood Graveyard  
House, Old Warminster Rd  
Liberty Hall Blacksmith Shop Book, page showing “shoeing horses, etc.”  
Liberty Hall Blacksmith Shop book “shoeing” & “finding iron”  
Liberty Hall Mill Book page noting “flour, corn, wheat”  
Liberty Hall Mill Book 1807 Cover  
Liberty Hall Mill Book page 1804 “ginning cotton”  
Liberty Hall Mill  
Liberty Hall Manor House  
Liberty Hall slave graveyard  
Liberty Hall Dormitory

Mailed Building photo: Tucker Cottage Edgewood  
Mailed Building photo: Edgewood Dovecote, smokehouse, dairy  
Mailed Building photo: Edgewood icehouse  
Mailed Building photo: Bon Aire front view

Mailed Streetscape: Bon Aire, James River, RR  
Mailed Streetscape: East view over Bon Aire low-grounds  
Mailed Streetscape: Edgewood Entrance, showing corn crib  
Mailed Streetscape: Warminster Crossroads

Map: 1832 portion S. Augustus Mitchell map  
Map: Briscoe Guy #1  
Map: Briscoe Guy #2  
Map: Claudius Crozet 1824  
Map: Composite map of Old Warminster Road- Hebron Church  
Map: USGS Boundary Warminster Rural Historic District VDHR 062-5160  
Map: VDHR VCRIS map of Liberty Hall Mill, Blacksmith shop, Swan Creek North sites

Mutual Assurance Liberty Hall July 1805 shows 2 “Ware Houses” 1 “scale house” [scan]  
Old Warminster Road House  
Old Warminster Road “Slave Church” and burial sites

Pre historic: Greenstone Celt Miner B site  
Pre historic: Metate Swan Creek Levee site  
Pre historic Projectile Points Miner A site  
Pre historic Pestle Swan Creek Farm North site

Swedenborgian Church/Masonic Lodge 1947 photo [Briscoe Guy]  
Warminster C & O RR Station ca. 1890  
Warminster RR station closes undated newspaper clipping ca. 1960  
Warminster Schoolhouse [on Liberty Hall tract]

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> National Register of Historic Places Registration form Edgewood, VDHR 062-0004, 2002

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Inventory Nomination Form Bon Aire, VDHR 062-0089 1980

<sup>3</sup> Trout, W. E. III, *A Guide to the Works of the James River & Kanawha Company From The City of Richmond to the Ohio River*, Prepared for the Virginia Canals and Navigation Society Third Edition, January 1999 page 12.

<sup>4</sup> Midway Mill: [http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Delisted\\_Resources/062-0023\\_Midway\\_Mill\\_nomination.pdf](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Delisted_Resources/062-0023_Midway_Mill_nomination.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Guy, Briscoe Baldwin, *Warminster, Ghost town of the Virginia Countryside*, University of Virginia, Department of Engineering: Charlottesville, VA, 1947 page 11.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p 11

<sup>7</sup> Martin, Joseph, “*A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia*” Charlottesville, Virginia: 1835. Pp241, 242.

<sup>8</sup> Guy, p 45

<sup>9</sup> Brown, Alexander, *The Cabells and their Kin*, Harrisonburg, VA: C. J. Carrier Company, 1978, pp.657, 658.

<sup>10</sup> Early, Mary W., *Some Reminiscences of the Warminster Society*, The New Church Messenger, Volume 107. Google Books digitization of the Swedenborg Society publication, July 15, 1914, page 45.

<sup>11</sup> Library Of Virginia: Works Progress Administration Inventory Survey Report: Swedenborgian Church 1937 March 10.

<sup>12</sup> See discussion of the path to land ownership in Nelson County discussed in Martha Terrell Harris’, *From Slave to Landonner: How Black Farmers Used Tenant Farming as a Stepping Stone, Virginia 1865-1910*, Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Department of History, 1993.

<sup>13</sup> Lay, K. Edward Email to Cabell Smith, July 5, 2025 acknowledges the need for verification by deed and tax search for the information regarding Belmont/Old Warminster Rd. properties, but offers the following endnote sources:  
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<sup>14</sup> Nelson County Courthouse, Deed Book #16, pages 413, 414.

<sup>15</sup> Lay, K. Edward, Email to Cabell Smith, July 2, 2015

<sup>16</sup> Identified in email from K. Edward Lay to Cabell Smith July 2, 2015

<sup>17</sup> Pollard, Oliver A., Jr., *Under the Blue Ledge*, Richmond, VA: The Dietz Press, 1997. Page 127.

<sup>18</sup> <http://smuseum.avenue.org/ourhistory/home.html> [Scottsville Museum Newsletter, Scottsville, Virginia Further, The University of Virginia online [press] archive offers this news story footage of the 1966 closing of Moon’s Store: <http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/uva-lib:2244325>

<sup>19</sup> Caitlin, Robert I. II, *Postcard Vignettes of C & O History, Greetings from Warminster*. C & O Magazine, June, 2015. Pp 27, 29

<sup>20</sup> Brown, Alexander, pp. 39, 42.

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<sup>21</sup> Cabell Family Papers, Albert & Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. MSS 38-111 typical indenture bond: 1752 October 3 Indenture: Dr. William Cabell & John Jude. Jude rents land for 13 years, pays in tobacco & plants peach and apple orchards

<sup>22</sup> Walker, Frances Moorman, *The Early Episcopal Church in the Amherst-Nelson Area*, Amherst County, VA: J. P. Bell, 1964. Page 14.

<sup>23</sup> Brown, Alexander, page 51.

<sup>24</sup> Email, Robert Self to Cabell Smith, May 19, 2015, referencing Archer Minardi's study Midway in her study of Cabell Homes and Graveyards, CD compiled 2013

<sup>25</sup> Breen, T. H., *American Insurgents, American Patriots: Revolution of the People*, New York: MacMillan, 2010, page 162.

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<sup>29</sup> Guy, page 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., page 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., page 34.

<sup>32</sup> Brown, Alexander, page 241.

<sup>33</sup> Guy, 27, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., page 24.

<sup>35</sup> Brown, William Moseley, George Lodge No. 32 A.F & A. M. (Virginia) George Lodge No. 32 A.F & A. M. (Virginia), Staunton, VA: McLure Printing Company, 1950. Pp 21, 31.

<sup>36</sup> Guy, page 30.

<sup>37</sup> *Survey of Architectural Resources Norwood and Wingina Vicinities Nelson County, Virginia*, Richmond: County of Nelson and Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2014, pp17, 18.

<sup>38</sup> Guy, 42,45.

<sup>39</sup> Martin, Joseph, "*A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia*" Charlottesville, Virginia: 1835. Page 241.

<sup>40</sup> Guy, page 45.

<sup>41</sup> *Survey of Architectural Resources Norwood and Wingina*, pp 22, 23

<sup>42</sup> Guy, page 53.

<sup>43</sup> Gibson, Langhorne, Jr., *Cabell's Canal*, Richmond, VA: The Commodore Press 2000. Pp.218, 219-238, 266-279, 296, 301,302.

<sup>44</sup> Saunders, Paul, *Heartbeats of Nelson*, Lynchburg, Virginia: Blackwell Press, 2007, page 520.

<sup>45</sup> Sweet, Palmer C., *Bettie Martin Iron Mine and Olds Furnace, North Garden, Virginia*, Charlottesville, VA: "Virginia Minerals" publication of the Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, Vol 49, Feb/May 2006, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Espenshade, Gilbert H., *Geology and Mineral Deposits of the James River-Roanoke River District*, *Geological Survey Bulletin #1008*, Department of the Interior: U. S. Government Printing Office 1954, page 3, pp. 81-85.

<sup>47</sup> Letter: Thomas W. Dixon, Jr. , Chairman & President Emeritus and Chief Historian, Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society, Inc. to Cabell Smith , 6/17/15.

<sup>48</sup> Saunders, page 280.